

You are not alone

Important information for your
health and healing journey



SANE Exam

A Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Exam (SANE exam) will provide you with treatment for injuries, pregnancy prevention options, treatment for sexually transmitted infections and evidence collection, if you choose. Michigan law gives all sexual assault victims the right to have a medical forensic exam and evidence kit collected up to five days after the assault. To learn more about what typically happens during an exam, visit Michigan.gov/Voices4.



Paying for the exam

Under Michigan law, **sexual assault victims cannot be billed for the direct costs of the sexual assault medical forensic exam or for insurance co-pays related to the exam.**

The healthcare facility can bill your insurance, but only with your permission. If you do not have insurance or if you are worried that billing your insurance company could be a risk to your safety or privacy, Michigan's SAFE Response program will reimburse the healthcare provider for the exam and evidence collection.

If you have additional injuries or mental health needs as a result of the assault that weren't treated during the initial forensic medical exam, you may be eligible for assistance with medical bills. For more information, you can call the Crime Victim Services Commission at **877-251-7373**.



Ask to be tested

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

An STI is an infection passed from one person to another through vaginal, anal, or oral contact. STIs can infect a person of any age or gender. Although the signs may vary, when an STI starts showing symptoms, it's called a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Testing

You may have questions about your risk of getting an STI. The only way to know if you have contracted an STI is to get tested. You may need to ask to be tested, as not all healthcare providers automatically test for STIs after a sexual assault.

Many STIs can be prevented with antibiotics if treated soon after a sexual assault. If the exam provider feels this is necessary in your case, tests may be done, and antibiotics may be given to you. Your healthcare provider will recommend which tests are important to have now and which may require follow-up care.

Symptoms

If you experience any of the following symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately:

- Burning, itching, or unusual discharge
- Milky or bad smelling discharge from vagina or penis
- Sores on your mouth, anal area or genitals
- Burning or bleeding with urination
- Fever
- Bleeding with intercourse

What is sexual assault?



Sexual assault is when a person forces or pressures another person into unwanted sexual contact. This can be unwanted sexual penetration of the body or unwanted contact with private parts of the body. Rape, sexual abuse, molestation, incest, and sexual violence are some of the terms used to describe sexual assault.

Sexual assault is **NEVER** the victim's fault. The only person responsible for it is the perpetrator who chose to commit the sexual assault.



What you might be feeling

Whatever you are feeling right now and in the future is completely normal. Everyone responds differently to the trauma of sexual assault. However, many people experience similar reactions in different areas of their lives.

Some of these include:

Physical

- Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- Feeling tired all the time
- Changes in eating patterns
- Headaches and muscle soreness
- Weakened immune system

Emotional

- Anger, fear, anxiety
- Shame, guilt, self-doubt or self-blame
- Vulnerability
- Shock and numbness
- Disbelief, confusion, denial

Cognitive

- Difficulty concentrating
- Flashbacks
- Thoughts such as:
 - "Why me?"
 - "Am I making this up?"
 - "Why didn't I _____?"
 - "No one will believe me."
 - "I'm making it seem worse than it was."

Social

- Not leaving home
- Discomfort being in crowds
- Difficulty with physical and emotional intimacy
- Overachieving
- Underachieving

For more information, visit **[Michigan.gov/Voices4](https://michigan.gov/Voices4)**.



Your healing journey

There is no single path toward healing. Everyone's journey is unique. However, there are some general stages victims may go through as they work toward healing from the sexual assault.



Many victims find that they go back and forth through these stages during the healing process. Please remember that any response you have is normal.

Immediate crisis

Right after the assault and for days, weeks or months you may experience a state of crisis. You may have trouble eating, sleeping, getting out of bed, concentrating and maintaining usual routines. You may struggle with shock, numbness, denial, powerlessness, fear, anger, guilt or shame.

A return to "normal"

As time passes, these feelings may go away a bit. You may have developed ways to cope that are helping you feel better. This return to "normal" often feels good and you may begin to feel like you did before the sexual assault. If you've been seeing a therapist or doing something else to work toward healing, it's common to think about taking a break at this point.

Crisis again

At some point, your ways of coping may stop working. It's common for something or someone to trigger memories of the assault. You may go into a state of crisis again and feel like you did right after the assault. This is normal and happens to many victims more than once. It can be very difficult for you, your friends, and family to understand. This may be a time when it is helpful to reach out to a therapist or another type of healing process that feels right.

Putting the pieces of your life together

It is common to go back and forth between feelings of "normal" and crisis. Over time, this back and forth process is how you put the assault together with who you are as a person. In the beginning, it may feel like the assault defines you. As time passes, the assault may begin to feel less defining and more like something that happened to you. You may still have painful feelings and memories, but they may be less intense, not last as long, and not have the same difficult impact on your daily living.



Talking to others about the sexual assault

It takes a lot of courage to reach out to someone else, tell them your story and talk with them about your feelings. For some survivors of sexual assault, family and friends can be very helpful during this time of healing. They may help you feel safe just by being near or listening. They may also be able to provide emotional support and help you connect with services. It is important for you to surround yourself with people who can support you on your healing journey.

Help & Resources



You may feel you want to talk to someone at some point after the assault. Michigan's sexual assault hotline offers immediate support and referrals to local service providers. Your information will never be shared, and you only have to share as much or as little about your identity as you see fit. Hotline services are:

✓ 24/7

✓ Free


✓ Confidential

✓ Anonymous

Counselors can help you connect with local service programs that provide individual counseling, support groups, legal advocacy, support for friends and family, and much more.

Sexual Assault Hotline
855-VOICES4
24/7. Free. Confidential.

CALL
 **855-864-2374**

TEXT*
 **866-238-1454**

TTY
 **517-381-8470**

M i c h i g a n . g o v / V o i c e s 4

DIVISION
of
VICTIM SERVICES



**Standard text messaging rates may apply*